

Melbourne

17th May 1883

My dear Andrew

I was very glad to receive your letter and to hear that you were all well. I at once saw about the book "Studies in Philosophy ancient and Modern" by Courtney. Walter it seems had not neglected the matter, but could not obtain the book. I instituted enquiries on my own hook both at Mullens and Robertsons and definitely ascertained that they had not got and never had the book. I will enquire again by and by and let you know if successful.

Monday last being Richmond, was observed as a holiday in the school offices, Banks and law offices, and I took the opportunity of going down to Geelong in one of Howard Smith's boats the "Excelsior". There were about 300 people on board and I enjoyed the trip very much.

I feel more at home in Geelong than I have been since I have been in Victoria. It was nice and lethargic, dreaming away by the bright waters of the Bay, and afforded a happy contrast to this Melbourne where "The world is too much with us" (another check for the old man!!). The time at my disposal was limited, but with the assistance of a young fellow stopping at the 'Savern', who knew something of the place, I did the principal points of interest ~~at the place~~ - Standing on the rise of the hill at the top of Moorabool St (the Bourke St of Geelong) in the vicinity of the Grammar School, an admirable building embosomed in English and native trees and shrubs one sees the broad waters of the Bay bordered by misty shores and promontories with the "You know" bluely outlined in the distance. All round in the opposite ^{direction} sketch the vast plains sprinkled with clusters of trees and dwellings and farmhouses till they melt away in

the horizon with the River Barrow
winding on to the South. How infinitely
calm it all looked! How the soft
wind blowing up from the sea
seemed to whisper to me so hopefully
and joyously and encouragingly! - For
did it not come from where my
thoughts are so often turned, and
breathe to me (or so I fancied) that
it knew of my land and loves
and dreams, and that for all
my imperfections and weaknesses
I was not yet exiled from noble
friendship and sympathy - These
thoughts were with me, too, as
I sat alone in the stern of the
vessel on a coil of rope as we
were coming back - A rich sunset
burned over the western plains
and delicately tinged the long foam-
back of the steamer while a number
of white seabirds delicately poised
in the beautiful air, kept steadily
flying in our wake within a few
yards of me - This was the first
good day-dream I have had, and
when we entered the sinuous Narra
with its ditchy shores and Malabogian
smells and Melbourne feared into
sight, I tore myself from it with regret.
(Here sentiment? Well, yes, O worldly-wise
critic, but he is wrong I write, ^{now} knows more than you.
I can trust my picture.)

I passed the Bookshop of Willie's
stepbrother in Kelong (G. Burn) - but
the departure of the steamer was
close at hand at the time and
I did not venture in. It appears
to be a nice well-stocked place,
and I was much tempted to go in
and see the boss.

I am getting along very
well in the office so far. There
has been a fair amount of work
but ^{I understand} matters are much livelier at
intervals. Young Klugender who
manages the Common Law
Department left for Adelaide the
day I entered the office and is
not back yet. This has made
my position more onerous than
I bargained for. I had to tackle
a matter yesterday which gave me
a little anxiety. In an agency
matter we had entered a caveat
against ^{the} a leasehold transfer on behalf
of the official assignee of an insolvent
whose interest in the lease had been
sold by the Sheriff under a fi fa.
The caveat was up yesterday, and
consequently the transfer could have

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been registered to day and the official assignee quacked or. In consequence of the lateness of receiving instructions and having to draw a long affidavit in support, I was late in getting to chambers and found that Justice Williams, who takes Chamber business this week, had gone for the day and no one knew where - Liginboheim was presiding in the Criminal Court and after a lot of delay and trouble I succeeded in getting ~~an~~ consent from him, through his associate, to hear the application when the Court rose in the evening. When I attended in his Chambers he was sitting in his scarlet robes but had thrown off that wonderful full-bottomed wig which muffs the judicial visage here. Two tall candles on the table threw up his face and figure very distinctly, and in the pauses of the business when he was consulting some authority or when he looked up with some question I could not help inwardly admiring his face and manner. The portrait in Löttinger

is very like, but the man of to day
is older looking and graver; ~~but~~
The same intellectual forehead
and well moulded features are there.
I feel quite at my ease in his
dignified but mild presence, and
managed to get over some of his
objections and obtained a satisfactory
order for the extension of the caveat.
I was in a bit of a funk about
this matter for there was about
£500 worth of property at stake,
and I feel considerable relief when
I drew the order, which I had to
do on the spot, and got his signature.
There was a miss with the Titles
office ~~next morning~~ when I served
~~that Regent~~ ^{the Regent} with copy order just thing this
morning. They wanted to contend that
the order should have been served
before 3 pm yesterday, but they caved
in eventually and the claw on the
property remains - I have gone into
detail over this little matter because
it gives you some insight into the work
I have to tackle, and introduces a
Victorian celebrity for whom I know you
entertain a deep respect -

Indeed, there is a divine difference
between my 'life in this office and

that of G & B's. One of the first mots
I perpetrated was to gently remark
that there was a great lack of
principal in ~~that~~ ^{the} office - I go in
and out and do my work with
very little reference to them - some
days I have scarcely seen and
never spoken to them - I write
letters every day and I am
so little concerned about a
principal in the matter, that I
often send them in by one of
the juniors, who gets them signed
and scuttles off with them - of
course there is responsibility about
this thing, but how different a
man feels when he can make a
dash to exercise his will a little
like this - How different to that miserable
and ungenerous system under which
I so long withered! Walter is very
kind to me, and when I have had
occasion to invoke his assistance he
has always cordially rendered it. I am
glad to say his health has improved
of late, and he appears brighter and
more communicative. It is needless to
say how deeply I trust this will continue.
for his long weakness has given his
mother and sister considerable anxiety.
When I went into his office one day

last week I found the man that
only lives 'in the winter' in the
enjoyment of sweet ^{filial} ^{paternal} converse..
With an uncertain kind of smile,
he extended a very limp hand to me,
probably thinking that the first thing
I would say to him would be -
"Where ~~are~~ is the testimonial that you
first of all promised to give me
in Hobart and afterwards promised
to send to Melbourne to me? Have
you drafted it yet? or is it advanced
to the stage of fair copy draft for
perusal?" Some abstracting thought
was in his mind for I do not
recollect that he asked me how I
was or how I liked the place, or the
office or anything - Walter looked
about as cheerful as a jilted
opher and after a few commonplace
to my I beat a retreat. I have
not seen him since. Walter is so
charmed with his society that he
confessed to me he made an
appointment to meet him at Elborne
Chambers the other ~~evening~~ ^{afternoon} and slept
out the back way some ten minutes
before the time. "How dreadful!" "Query"
"See me hereon" - "What meant?" "I should
like to have seen him wandering up and
down the corridors like the nigger in the
coal cellar with an extinguished candle looking

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for a black cat that was 'nt there!

I saw George Macmillan one evening last week. I suddenly became aware that he was sitting next to me at a table in the Tavern at tea-time and the recognition was mutual. In the course of conversation he complained that his sisters didn't find time to write to him; but we agreed in the opinion that under the circumstances this was excusable. Willie and Edvard must skip this part if they do me the honor of reading this letter. This part too had better be kept from Mrs. C. for she's an awful tartar so the envelopes told me in strict confidence - Sing hey! the blissful border land, the merry maidens and the swains!

The Melbourne Chess Club is a veritable land of nod. It seems to be the one place where chessplayers are not to be found. I waited there several evenings lately and there was nothing but what going on. I have

not encountered Burns yet although
I went on those nights when he gave
me to understand he came to the
Club. In fact the chess players here
are a peculiar lot of fish, and if
I had the same interest in the
game I once had I should be
deeply concerned to see so much
apathy and ill will about. Whether
I am too drunk like a true born
Bubsh swiper, and his appearance
certainly does not belie this. Simpson
another good player, an accountant,
gets deliriously drunk - and Fournell
says he ought to be put into the
refuge for Inebriates - Burns doesn't
get drunk on liquor, but he is
intoxicated with his reputation -
and won't play anybody who might
beat him - Choughan played a game
with me almost under protest as he
said he had almost determined to
give the game up - In fact as far
as the Melbourne Chess Club is concerned
its members appear to regard me as
one of the mosquitoes with which the
Club room is infested, and to be brushed
away as much as possible - In saying
this I am not rancoring under any
snub or discourtesy, I am simply

recording impressions derived from
general observations and from these
I must say they appear a sorry lot.
There is a room specially set apart
for Chess and draughts in this Tavern
and several of the best players in the
city belonging to a certain clique
come here - Chief among these are
J. M. Bonnell, and Burroughton the
lightning player as they call him.

When I first came here I used to
drop in here sometimes o' nights -
but did not for some time play, or
show my acquaintance with the game.
The Chess Room is generally crowded
of a night with a smother enshrouded
collection of players among whom
Jews and Germans are conspicuous.
At least one night I sat down before
Bonnell who didn't know anything of
me at that time. One of his officious
admirers wanted to know what odds
I wanted and looked quite amused
when I said I would play level - I
opened with the King's Gambit and
played a variation from Normal
which brings the Q K round to the
King's side with a view of sacrificing
it. I got a good game and soon became
aware that a small crowd had gathered
round the table, and eyeing me rather

anxiously. The excitement increased
when Connell had to lower his flag
with the graceful acknowledgment
that he did not think they had
such strong players in Macmania.
You ~~would~~ won't think me egotistical
in recording this I hope. Since then
of course, I am treated with profound
consideration by the heterogeneous
denizens of the Chess Room, and
always have a gallery when I play.
I don't frequent the room much, as
I have determined to devote my spare
time at present to more important
studies pertaining to the office -
I have played two games with Connell
since, losing one and drawing one.
With the lightning player I have played
4 games winning 2 drawing 1 losing one.
Young H'Cole who is at the University
visited me at the Tavern one evening
last week and spent a pleasant evening
with me discussing matters chiefly of
the chess problem order for which he has
a peculiar genius - These chess details
I'm afraid will weary you, but Willie
may find some interest in them - I'm
just taking my fling in this letter.

David sent me a paper yesterday
in which I see you are retained by the

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Crown to ~~retain~~ ^{defend} that precious pair
of young murderers O'Gden and
Sutherland - I suppose you can
only plead their youth and the
unchecked spread of that pernicious
literature which acting upon
certain minds and temperaments
urges through very morbidness to
crime - What else to say, Heaven only
knows! I know if you can find
anything you will plead it without
reference to the fact that your retainer
is in ~~no~~ one sense only a legal
formality. You will not forget that,
whatever popular feeling is, that you
are charged to speak for the sparing
of their lives and you will do it
honestly and well - You must tell
me about this work when you write.

Lacking of Dave I should be
glad when you write if you tell me
how he is getting on. I think there
is the making of a good fellow in
him, and when I say this I do not
say it out of mere brotherly kindness.

One of my sisters tells me he is kind and considerate to them at home; and I cannot tell you how much I feel that this is so. I need not disguise the fact from you that my mother was very fond of me, and I know she kept back a good deal when I told her I would leave home. I am therefore glad to think that Dave's conduct will make her think less of my absence.

When household cares remit perhaps your partner in joy and sorrows will write me a line or two. The very sight of handwriting I know is pleasant to me. Will you kindly put in a word for me? I wonder what Emmy and Johnny would do if they got into the Arcades here when all the treasures of joy &c are glittering under the rows of electric light. They'd just melt, I guess. ^{mitter} Shooman's would be small beans after that vision. Are they and Anew well? I hope so. I send them my unsubstantial kisses over "the silver streak". We would have a spree if I had them in the Tavern for a while. Of course I don't mean

Anew too. He'd funk on it and cry
to get back to his mother and not
play the spark at all. But Johnny
I think 'ud ruffle it well and Emmy
— well Emmy of course would be
very prim and quiet à la papa —
except at those intervals when she
avows it's nice to be naughty and
she wants to be bad.

I received a letter from George
on Tuesday ^{last} giving me particulars
of the Menora Meeting which it seems
was an animated one. He informs
me that he goes to Sydney shortly —
I hope it will improve his prospects.
As he requested me to address my
letter to him at Sydney, I shan't say
anything further on this head at present.
He appears to be in good spirits, but
he is never dejected in those; and
very sanguine with regard to the
good mine spec —
Tell Bobbie I intend to write him
a letter presently. Indeed, I should have
done so before. But he 'woud see my
letters ^{to the wife} and that has made me late in writing.
The hour grows late — I have
written a long and perhaps dull letter.
I have spoken straight out without

much pondering. Perhaps you will
find it better for that - My
hand falters now but dear Andrew,
my heart does not and would
bear up for more pages -

With kindest regards to Mrs
Beard and the ladies of the circle,
and my comrade love to the Boys,
Believe me, affectly yours

J. G. Norton

PS I sent you an "Auskalanian"
with a poem of G.H.'s in it. What
do you think of it? I have not seen
her since its publication - I have
not called upon Mrs Webster yet -
I shall try and go to the Unitarian
Chapel next Sunday when I may
have the opportunity of ~~hearing from~~
speaking to her - Remember me to Lucy.
Tell him to write, and that quickly -
Willie's letter was very welcome - I will
write him soon. J. G. Norton